

Explore the Coast Grants



2023 ANNOUNCEMENT & APPLICATION

Released December 9, 2022

Application is attached to this announcement
Submit Application via email to grants@scc.ca.gov
Application **Due Monday, February 27, 2023.**
For questions only, email explorethecoast@scc.ca.gov
Please read the request for proposal thoroughly.



Explore the Coast Grants Request for Proposals

Background

The California State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) announces the availability of grants to public agencies, federally-recognized tribes and indigenous communities¹, and nonprofit organizations for programs that facilitate and enhance the public's opportunities to explore California's spectacular coast and San Francisco Bay shoreline. The ocean, coast, and beaches have long been recognized and used as spaces of joy, relaxation, and healing for many Californians. The ability to experience the coast without fear of physical barriers, feelings of not belonging, or financial challenge is crucial to how individuals cultivate their lifelong connections with the coast. The Explore the Coast grant program seeks to provide enjoyable coastal experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast ("ETC Priority Communities").

ETC Priority Communities may include but are not limited to lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, people of color, indigenous communities, immigrant communities, foster youth, and other historically excluded communities who face societal challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. You can use [this mapping tool](#) or other resources you know of to help determine if you are serving low-income communities (please note the tool linked will refer to these as a "disadvantaged" or "severely disadvantaged community").

Projects should also meet one or more of the following priorities:

- Provide an enjoyable experience at the coast.
- Reduce economic, physical, operational, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast.
- Inspire ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning and interactive activities.

Approximately \$1 million is available for this grant round.

Award Amount

Applicants may request a grant amount of up to \$100,000.

¹ Applicants from indigenous communities who are not federally-recognized tribes should work through a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor for their submittal.

Project Start and End date

Applicants should apply for projects that could **start in late 2023 or early 2024 and aim to be completed by January 2026**. The Conservancy will base the size of the award on each project's needs, its overall benefits, and the extent of competing demands for funds.

Project Eligibility

The Coastal Conservancy is a non-regulatory state agency that works to preserve, improve, and restore public access, natural resources, and agricultural lands along the Pacific coast, San Francisco Bay shoreline, and adjacent counties. The Conservancy undertakes projects and works with public agencies, tribes, and nonprofit organizations to accomplish these goals.

Increasing public access to California's coast is a core component of the Conservancy's work. With the Explore the Coast Program, the Conservancy seeks to support programs and organizations that work with people and communities who face challenges accessing the coast and/or enjoying the coast.

Eligible Applicants

Public agencies, federally-recognized tribes, and nonprofit organizations are eligible for funding. To be eligible, a nonprofit organization must qualify under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Other community-based organizations and tribes or indigenous communities that are not federally-recognized may apply with a 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor.

PLEASE NOTE: Organizations that have a current Explore the Coast Grant are only eligible if their existing grant will be complete by December 1, 2024. In addition, organizations with a current Explore the Coast grant cannot apply for funding that would overlap their existing grant.

Eligible Project Locations

Projects must involve visiting the coast of California including the shores of bays. The Conservancy is interested in supporting programs that bring participants to the coast from throughout the state, including inland areas.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include a wide range of programs and activities that help to bring people to the coast and/or enhance their experience at the coast. **At least 60% of participants served by the grant must be from ETC Priority Communities.** Competitive projects will provide participants with joyful and culturally relevant coastal experiences. Other benefits such as ecosystem stewardship and environmental education are secondary benefits and are not necessary for a project to be eligible. (See Selection Criteria below for more information).

Examples of eligible projects:

- Providing transportation for ETC Priority Community members to participate in recreational, educational, or stewardship programs at the coast.

- Providing coastal experiences such as kayaking, surfing, or sailing for persons with disabilities.
- Providing beach recreation day trips for participants and their families.
- Facilitating festivals, docent programs, or other outreach events to promote and increase coastal recreational opportunities for ETC priority community members. Applicants should have a clear plan for engaging ETC priority community members in large-scale festivals open to the public.
- Providing overnight coastal experiences for participants.
- Promoting the use of public transit to access the coast.

Ineligible Projects

Examples of ineligible projects include:

- Projects that comprise 25% or more of classroom-based programs and/or curriculum. For example, a 4-hour field trip should include a maximum of 1 hour in the classroom and a minimum of 3 hours recreating at the coast.
- Projects that solely involve beach clean-ups or volunteer ecosystem stewardship.
- Construction of new facilities. Please note, however, that the Conservancy has funded hundreds of projects to build new trails, trailheads, and other amenities (beach stairways, bathrooms, overlooks, etc.) through other funding programs. Please contact us directly if you are pursuing this type of project.

We encourage you to contact us if you have any questions regarding the eligibility of your project. Additional information on how to reach us is located below.

Application Submittal

The Explore the Coast grant application can be accessed by clicking the links below or clicking the links on [our website](#).

IF USING WORD: Please open using the link [here](#).

IF USING GOOGLE DOCS: Please open using the link [here](#). When it is opened, go to file > "Make a copy". You can then freely edit and share the document in Google Docs. When you are ready to submit the application, go to File > Download > Microsoft Word (.docx). If you do not have a Microsoft Office license, you can instead download the document as a PDF and send it to the email below.

Submit completed application as a word document to grants@scc.ca.gov by **Monday, February 27, 2023, by 11:59 pm.**

Applicants are welcome to attach supplemental documents, including up to 3 relevant photos (preferably as jpg), programs, and schedules with their application submission; these attachments should not exceed 10MB total. Relevant documents, including photos, should

provide examples of the participant activities of the proposed project.

Please be aware that all documents submitted to the Conservancy become public records. The Conservancy will assume that submitted photos are permissible for use unless the applicant clarifies otherwise.

Contact Us for Technical Assistance

Prospective applicants are highly encouraged to discuss their projects with Conservancy staff before submitting their applications. We can help you make your application as competitive as possible. You can request a consultation, join our informational webinar, and/or join the technical assistance “Office Hour” sessions.

Contact Information

To request a project consultation call, please email explorethecoast@scc.ca.gov. Please provide a brief description of your project idea, the general geographic area your participants will come from, and the name, phone number, and email of the person to be contacted. We will respond within 3 business days. **Potential applicants can contact us any time before the application due date for technical assistance.**

Informational Webinar

The Conservancy will hold a webinar on January 5, 2023 to walk through the Explore the Coast Grant Program and address questions regarding the application. Potential project applicants are encouraged to attend. The registration link for the webinar is [here](#). The recorded webinar will be posted on our [website](#) afterward.

Technical Assistance “Office Hours”

The Conservancy will offer two one-hour Technical Assistance “Office Hour” sessions where SCC staff will answer more specific grant questions and provide guidance with application preparation to potential applicants via zoom meeting. Break-out rooms will be an option for one-on-one assistance.

- **January 19th** Technical Assistance registration link is [here](#).
- **February 8th** Technical Assistance registration link is [here](#).

Anticipated Grant Schedule

Grant Round 2023

December 9, 2022	Release of Request for Proposal
January 5, 2023	ETC Informational Webinar
January 19, 2023	Technical Assistance Office Hours #1
February 8, 2023	Technical Assistance Office Hours #2
February 27, 2023	Applications Due by 11:59 pm
March – May 2023	SCC Staff & ETC Advisory Board review of applications
Late May 2023	Selection of projects to recommend for funding
Late 2023 or Early 2024	Grantees start work on their projects

Application Review and Grant Award Process

Project Review

Conservancy staff will evaluate each application for how well it meets the Selection Criteria stated below. Applicants may be contacted to provide additional information during the review process. Conservancy staff may seek assistance in evaluating the applications from individuals and technical experts with pertinent expertise from other governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other entities. After an initial round of review, a subset of the applications will be reviewed by the [Explore the Coast Advisory Board](#).

Selection Criteria

Projects will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Project description is clear. (5 points)
- The extent to which the project provides enjoyable and/or healing experiences at the coast. (10 points)
- The percentage of participants served who face challenges accessing or enjoying the coast. At least 60% of participants served by the grant must be from ETC priority communities (more points are awarded to projects with a higher percent of ETC priority participants). (10 points)
- The extent to which the project reduces economic, physical, or societal barriers to accessing or enjoying the coast. (5 points)
- The extent to which the project inspires an ongoing coastal resource stewardship ethic through active learning, interactive exploration, and providing an engaged and authentic

coastal experience. (5 points)

- The extent to which the project is inclusive of all participants and considers differences in cultural and social backgrounds, past experiences, knowledge, comfort levels, etc. (5 points)
- The extent to which the project serves participants with varying physical and/or cognitive capabilities. (5 points)
- The extent to which the project provides overall long-term positive impacts on participants (including leadership development opportunities, multi-year programs or programs that engage participants over multiple occasions, family or support system involvement, peer-to-peer mentorship, or solutions to overcome ongoing barriers). (10 points)
- The extent to which the project applicant has the capacity to build and foster connections with the community served (with higher points awarded to programs where the community has a leadership role). (5 points)
- The budget is clear and reasonable given the impact on each participant. (5 points)
- Project applicant has the capacity to carry out the project effectively and in a timely manner. (5 points)

Total possible points: 70

Final Selections

Applicants will be notified in late June 2023 if their project has been selected to bring to the Conservancy's Board for final approval. Applicants will be notified of the final decision after the Conservancy's September 14, 2023 Board Meeting.

Conservancy Board Approval

Projects recommended by staff for funding are subject to approval by the Coastal Conservancy Board at a public meeting. Conservancy staff will present the recommendations for Explore the Coast grants to the Conservancy Board on September 14, 2023. Applicants recommended by staff for funding are required to provide staff with all pertinent information in a timely manner to ensure Board consideration.

Project funding will not be available until a grant agreement between the Conservancy and the grantee has been executed, generally taking at least six weeks after Board approval.

Helpful Resources

The following resources may be helpful for the preparation of your grant application.

Grant Writing Skills

In 2016, the Conservancy offered training to "Improve Your Grant Writing Skills." The [recording of this webinar](#) provides helpful guidance on how to write robust grant applications.

Conservancy Grant Terms

Please review the [sample grant terms](#) before completing your application. Please note the insurance requirements for ETC grants. If the requirements result in higher insurance premiums for the applicant, this cost can be included in the grant budget.

Project Scope and Budget

Please review the [Sample Project Scope and Budget Tables](#) to help you to answer questions 9 and 10.

Assistance with Incomplete Application Documents

The Conservancy does not automatically disqualify an application if it is missing a required element. In these cases, the Conservancy will request the missing information and provide a deadline for submittal. If multiple parts of the application are missing, it will be considered ineligible.

Feedback

If your project does not receive a grant award, you can reach out to Conservancy staff to get feedback based on the Project Selection Criteria once all decisions have been made. This feedback may be helpful to you in applying for funding in the future.

Map of Explore the Coast Regions

Use this map to determine which region(s) your project will serve

